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Letter dated 22 September 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the written statement of the delegation of Chile in exercise of the right of reply to the statement of the President of Bolivia, Mr. Carlos Mesa Gisbert, given on 22 September 2004 at the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly. I should be grateful if the text of this letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Heraldo **Muñoz**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 22 September 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Reply of Chile to the statement made by the President of Bolivia, Mr. Carlos Mesa, at the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly on 22 September 2004

The President of Bolivia, in his statement to the General Assembly, referred to bilateral relations with Chile.

Despite the absence of formal diplomatic relations, Chile has made an effort to maintain active, innovative and mutually beneficial relations with Bolivia in many spheres of mutual interest, in particular physical integration, trade and expeditious and efficient access to the sea for Bolivia through Chilean ports.

Chile accords Bolivia treatment that is in conformity with international law and offers it full scope for its foreign trade, with access to special port facilities. The system of free transit between Chile and Bolivia was innovative and anticipated by more than half a century the adoption of similar mechanisms by other nations in the framework of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). Chile actively negotiated and approved without reservations the Almaty Declaration relating to landlocked and transit developing countries, which promotes wide-ranging cooperation in the priority areas of transport, trade and transit for mutual benefit.

Bolivia's reluctance to respond to Chile's various initiatives towards rapprochement and the issuance of a decree by Bolivia prohibiting the re-export of gas to Chile from third countries have seriously limited the opportunities for constructive dialogue between the two nations.

Notwithstanding this situation, Chile has persisted in its willingness to conduct a dialogue with Bolivia concerning all aspects of their bilateral relations, based on a broad cooperation agenda, with a view to addressing in a practical and innovative manner essential questions of common interest.

As President Ricardo Lagos said, "if there are issues left over from the past, they will be resolved on the basis of an agenda for the future". To that end, Chile has reiterated its offer of full diplomatic relations, which would allow the countries to develop their ties and open up new and promising vistas.

Chile calls upon Bolivia to join it in addressing the challenges of the twenty-first century, on the basis of a respect for treaties and a contemporary outlook. Progress will require real political will, courage, imagination and, above all, a true desire to learn from the past and to overcome it in order to open up visionary avenues of understanding and cooperation.